

CMS Connection

June 2019

Director's Monthly Message: Janel L. Forde

Meteorologists recognize the first day of June as marking the beginning of Summer. For astronomers however, Summer starts on June 21st, the Summer Solstice, or the longest day of the year. June marks another period that is important for all of us to keep in mind. The month of June means that half of 2019 will be behind us.

This milestone should serve as a reminder for CMS bureaus and offices to reset their priorities and determine what we aim to accomplish in the second half of the year. With foresight and planning now, CMS can make the most of these next six months. Certainly, all of us face unforeseen emergencies and issues that arise requiring our attention, but by keeping the focus on the **big things** we seek to accomplish, we will not consume more of our time than necessary when putting out those fires.

Through the first half of the year, we saw real examples of our bureaus maintaining that focus. In the **Bureau of Personnel** – as we detailed in the April newsletter – they continue to work at reducing the critical candidate-to-hire timeframe from upwards of 300 days to 45 days by the end of 2019. The bureau is already making significant progress and the Personnel team is identifying creative solutions to address critical needs for State agencies.

The **Department of Human Services (DHS)** and **Health and Family Services (HFS)** are two recent agencies for whom Personnel used such problem solving. Both agencies are under threat of sanctions by the federal government because they are challenged to fill certain positions quickly enough to meet rising demand. They face extraordinary pressure as a direct result of insufficient staffing. In HFS's case, the agency has not been able to complete Medicaid eligibility determinations as required. It needs to hire hundreds of workers to fill vacancies dedicated to that critical task.



DHS and HFS recently worked with CMS's Bureau of Personnel to identify process improvements that would reduce burdensome bureaucratic paper processes that have slowed hiring. The new approach enables them to quickly hire for as many as a combined 500 critically-needed positions. Together with these two agency partners, CMS's Bureau of Personnel crafted process changes that comport with the Personnel Code and Personnel Rules while meeting the massive hiring needs of the agencies. Relief for the DHS and HFS workforce is on the way.

Lastly, June 30th marks the end of Fiscal Year 2019 and the entry of the Fiscal Year 2020 budget. This too is reason for optimism. The State has put its budget impasse years behind it. We are maintaining sound financials and no longer backsliding. With the Personnel anecdote for inspiration in mind, we can all look to the second half of 2019 with renewed energy toward accomplishing "**big things**." My call to action to all of you is to consider a couple of big things – and yes, small improvements as well – that you want to focus on accomplishing in these next six months and share them with your managers to gather their ideas, too.

Safety Corner: Avoid Becoming an “Office Potato”

June is National Safety Month. This is a topic that is as much about health as it is about safety. For many of us, we spend much of our days behind our desks or seated in front of a computer screen. The connection between a sedentary lifestyle and health problems is not exactly new, but when James Levine, a Mayo Clinic researcher, declared that, “sitting is more dangerous to our health than smoking,” people figuratively stood up and took notice. Numerous studies link extended periods of sitting with cancer, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, muscular and skeletal issues, high cholesterol and depression.

Such a list of maladies should be enough to get the attention of any desk-bound worker, but what should be done about it? The answer is simple. We need to sit less and move more. Getting our backsides out of chairs more often comes down to being more conscious about the sedentary nature of some of our work. The positive health effects easily outweigh the extra effort needed to change our workplace routines.



Here are five ideas to cut back on chair time:

Get up and move. Find the time to move and stretch throughout the workday. Give yourself a time limit in that chair and make it a priority to stand up and give your body a break from sitting. A good rule to consider is the 20-8-2 rule, considered by many to be the “ideal office work pattern.” Pioneered by Dr. Alan Hedge, a professor of ergonomics at Cornell University, it states that for every half-hour of work:

- Sit for 20 minutes,
- Stand for 8 minutes,
- And, stretch or move for 2 minutes.

Make exercise part of your routine. While exercise will not completely reverse the effects of an entire day of sitting, regular vigorous activity can add years to your life. If physical activity is not part of your routine outside of work, consider budgeting 15 minutes at lunch time to take a vigorous walk.

Walk and talk. Before gathering around a table for that next meeting, consider combining it with a walk outside or suggesting for a change of pace, conducting the meeting standing or meeting on another floor further away from your day-to-day office environment. Studies demonstrate that even a short walk prior to a meeting not only offers health benefits, but it provides clearer thinking and sparks creativity.

Measure how much time in your day could be considered sedentary. Take it as a challenge to learn which activities can be performed while standing or on the move.

Lead by example. If individuals show that they are serious about reducing chair time, others will take notice and do the same.



Profile: Illinois State Agency for Surplus Property (ILSASP)

The Illinois State Agency for Surplus Property (ILSASP) is part of **CMS's Bureau of Agency Services** and is indeed a unique operation. **Brent Boesdorfer**, division manager for Surplus Property Control, explains, "Surplus Property Control receives transfers of surplus State property daily. Just about any type of State property that you can think of flows to Surplus from State agencies, universities, commissions, and elsewhere in Illinois." From file cabinets and furniture to tractors and mowers from the Department of Natural Resources, Surplus Property Control is the central location for disposal and sale of a wide variety of property.

Once property is transferred to the Surplus warehouse in Springfield, it is available for any State agency or entity to acquire at no cost for the first two weeks. Property Control Officers (PCO) and employees approved by a PCO can view and tag items for acquisition onsite at the warehouse (1924 10 ½ Street, Springfield, IL 62703) from 12:30pm to 3:45pm daily, or other arrangements can be made with Surplus. After that two-week period, property is then made available to non-profit organizations at prices determined by Surplus Property Control.

Brent says, "Surplus Property Control has provided many State agencies and non-profit organizations with useful property and within their budgets." If State-owned property is not acquired within four weeks, it is immediately posted to **iBid** the Surplus operation's online public auction. The **iBid** online auctions run weekly with an average audience of 34,000 registered customers. In addition, ILSASP provides the State a constant revenue stream through its sales. "We generate on average \$3.5 million annually for the State," Brent adds.



The **Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO)**, part of the Surplus program, is charged with administering the transfer of surplus property from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) through the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to eligible law enforcement agencies. LESO is an immense resource for law enforcement across the State. Brent explains, "With this program, eligible law enforcement agencies are able to acquire vehicles, furniture, computers, first aid equipment, and other items at no cost, as part of their paid membership in the program. Members screen for needed property on a Federal website. They can then request acquisition of the property through the LESO office in Surplus and the property is delivered directly to them. Illinois' LESO program is the second largest of its kind in the U.S. with over 400 member agencies."

Surplus Property Control also receives property lost or confiscated at Illinois airports from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA.) It is donated from the Federal government to the State of Illinois to be sold at auction. Brent says, "The TSA property is some of our most unique. Knives, tools, toys, jewelry and watches, cameras, small electronics, even dozens of snow globes – which are also not allowed on planes – all arrive at Surplus Property Control weekly. The quantity of knives we receive is so plentiful that the staff has to literally sort them with shovels before breaking them down into sellable quantities based on brand and their potential revenue value." TSA items are consistently some of our most popular auctions on the iBid site. You never know what you will find on iBid; it changes every day."



Exemplary Employee of the Month: Gina A. LoGalbo, CMS Labor Counsel

This month, we recognize **Gina A. LoGalbo**, CMS Labor attorney, for her efforts in investigating employment-related arbitration cases. Gina's supervisor, **Diana Wise**, deputy general counsel for Labor Relations, explained in her nomination, "Gina does really amazing work for CMS. In one recent case, she was able to obtain the best possible outcome for the agency and the employee."

Gina, a United States Marine Corps veteran says, "I enjoy zealously representing the State of Illinois in arbitration cases, working with the CMS Labor team and other CMS colleagues, along with employees at other State agencies we serve."

After her tour of duty in the Marines, Gina attended the University of Illinois – Chicago where she majored in Spanish. She began her working career as an office coordinator for the Illinois State Police's Forensic Science Center in Chicago. Then with two small children, she decided to attend law school part-time. A move to the Worker's Compensation Commission (IWCC) as an administrative assistant followed, and once she earned her Juris Doctorate from John Marshall Law School, she turned to working as an IWCC staff attorney. Gina then moved on to serve in a labor relations role for a facility with the Department of Human Services (DHS,) and that has brought her to her CMS role today.



Gina LoGalbo, CMS Labor Relations (left) receives the Exemplary Employee of the Month recognition by Director Forde (right) at CMS's Thompson Center offices.

Kathleen Abbott, CMS's acting general counsel says of Gina, "Her tenacity in uncovering facts that other attorneys may have missed led to a positive outcome for the client agency, and her diligence resulted in a win for both parties." Gina gives credit to the supervisors she has had along the way in her State career. "I have been blessed with great people who have mentored me, taught me so much, and always encouraged me to continue pursuing my educational interests." Gina and her family live in the south suburbs of Chicago, and she most enjoys attending her now-four children's sporting events, including her oldest son who plays soccer for his high school team. "I guess you could say that we are all pretty competitive," she adds with a smile.



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